

Chairman Waukau's Notes

April 29, 2002

Poso My Fellow Menominees:

The Menominees are the largest tribe in the state of Wisconsin with some 8,000 members, plus we have the largest land base of any tribe with major infrastructural needs that other tribes don't have. In addition to that we are a non-280 tribe which means we have to provide a larger array of service that other tribes don't. What this translates to is that the Menominees probably will never be able to pay the huge per capita to its tribal members that other tribes pay. This brings forth a major concern for the tribe and that is Relinquishment of Tribal Membership or when a member opts to give up their Menominee membership and enroll in another tribe. The serious issues that the Legislature needs to think about are:

- a. Can a Relinquishee still claim descendency rights to hunt, fish and gather?
- b. Can a Relinquishee's children or grand children claim descendency rights to hunt, fish, and gather?
- c. Can a Relinquishee retain a 99 year year lease that they received prior to relinquishment?
- d. Can the descendents of a Relinquishee claim the blood quantum of their Relinquished parent or grandparent?

These questions all need to be answered to be absolutely fair to the enrolled tribal members who have opted to retain their membership. We must remember that the Menominee resources are for enrolled tribal members. With that goal in mind I am asking the Legislature to convene an Ad Hoc Council of Elders to develop a list of recommendations for the Legislature to consider. Any tribal elder who is 65 years of age or older and is interested in grappling with these difficult issues, please contact Neoma in the Chairman's office for consideration. I will be appointing Legislature Skubitz to chair this very important committee.

Legislators Wilber, Pyawasit, Waupochick, and I went to visit with Tribal members in Chicago. As always they were very gracious to the Legislature in spite of the fact that our guide, GiGi Delabruue, got us lost and we were a little late. Their big issues are universal health care and an off-Reservation gaming facility, acting as a resource for the tribe, the clear cutting and stumpage issue, plus they very interested in the naming ceremony. They provided us with a wonderful meal and they had many questions for the Legislators.

The spring sports season is in full swing so take some time to get out and cheer on those Menominee youth that involved in their various activities.

Sincerely,

Lisa Waukau
Honorable Tribal Chairman